fashion  health  women  innovate  act on it!

Special release for the 2012 edition of FESTIVAL MODE DÉSIGN MONTRÉAL
A healthy fashion industry!

The Réseau québécois d’action pour la santé des femmes (RQASF) prepared this pamphlet as part of its “Healthy Fashion” project. The RQASF has been working on the issue of body image for over 10 years. Over that time it has followed developments and observed the consequences of beauty ideals on the health of women and girls.

Why focus on the world of fashion? Because, let’s face it, fashion shapes how people define beauty. But it should be stressed that the image industry and media in general are concerned. The adoption in 2009 of the Québec Charter for a Healthy and Diverse Body Image* was applauded by the RQASF as an important first step. But since people have the choice of signing or not signing on to the Charter, it is up to all of us—both image-makers and the general public—to act.

What exactly do we mean by healthy and diverse body images? The RQASF’s pamphlet offers helpful guidelines that will sensitize us to the impact of the images we produce, broadcast and watch.

* http://www.jesigneenligne.com/fr/charte.php

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Canada
• Status of Women Canada
• Health Canada

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• Culture, Communications et Condition féminine
• Santé et Services sociaux
An individual and a collective responsibility

Are you part of the fashion and image industry (designer, photographer, stylist, advertiser, etc.)? Innovate in your own way to bring more women and men who truly represent the population’s diversity to the runways and before the camera. Be bold and choose scripts featuring something other than sexual seduction and the cult of youth and thinness.

Consumers and all of you devoted but aware fashionistas: you, too, can make your voices heard. Use the power of your wallet to show what you like and don’t hesitate to complain to companies when their advertising disturbs you.

http://rqasf.qc.ca/information/image-corporelle

Workshops and conferences available  Information RQASF: 514 877.3189

Discover the blog  Pour une mode en santé  rqasf.qc.ca/blogue
Whether you are a fashion or image professional or simply a consumer, you can use this guide to assess whether the material you produce, broadcast or watch contains healthy and diverse body images.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOU:

***** Do the models represent diverse body types that are representative of the population?

***** Does the image you’re looking at show women of various ages? Or does it leave the impression that only very young women, indeed only girls, can be considered truly beautiful?

***** Could a woman actually look like the models being presented without exerting excessive control over her weight or resorting to cosmetic interventions?

***** Do the models look healthy? Do you see muscles, curves and full-fleshed bodies . . . or do they look like starving teenagers?

***** How do you think this image will be interpreted by the young—girls and boys alike? What message is being sent about physical appearance, weight, male-female relationships and sexuality?

***** Do the poses look like they’ve been directly inspired by pornography? Is the script stereotypical, degrading or absurd—for both the man and the woman? Is the focus directed to body parts, like the crotch or an arched back that accentuates the behind and the breasts?

***** When a woman looks at this image, will her appreciation of her own physical appearance be likely to increase or shrink? If you are a woman, do you still feel at ease in your own body after seeing this image?

***** Do you think this image would have a positive impact on the self esteem of your female friends and co-workers, mother, girlfriend or daughter?

If not, DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
Graziella Battista
After running Il Sole for 10 years, Graziella Battista now cooks her sophisticated fare at another excellent Montréal restaurant called, quite simply, Graziella. But the fame of this chef and businesswoman reaches beyond Québec’s borders. Her recipes are published internationally and, according to La Cuillère d’argent, a bible of gastronomy for half a century, she is one of the top Italian chefs of the past 50 years.

France Geoffroy
Despite a tragic accident that turned the life of this professional contemporary dancer upside down, France Geoffroy often claims that “her wheels have brought her to places where her legs would never have taken her.” In addition to being the general artistic director of Corpuscule Danse, France Geoffroy is a teacher, public speaker and dedicated community activist. She is the spokesperson for the Fondation du Centre de Réadaptation Lucie-Bruneau and, in 2011, the dance event Corps-atypik and the international resilience conference.

Michelle Blanc
Consultant, blogger, author and speaker on Web marketing and strategy, Michelle Blanc is a superwoman who tried her hand at every trade before developing a passionate interest in the Internet and becoming a social media guru. Without a doubt, her greatest success was becoming Michelle—herself—after living for many years as Michel. “Competent,” “courageous,” “funny,” “integrity,” “disarming authenticity”: all those fortunate enough to have met this great lady are captivated!

Amina Gerba
Amina Gerba is an entrepreneur whose roots are in Cameroon. She is the founding president of Afrique expansion, a company that promotes Africa and African products in Canada, and Canadian know-how in Africa. She also heads Laboratoires Kariliss and is co-founder of the shea butter brand, Kariderm. In 2008, she was hailed as one of 25 women of influence by Les Affaires magazine.
The models you see in fashion magazines don’t reflect reality. The image being projected is misleading and unhealthy. Diverse physical types would help to promote a much more balanced view of female beauty.

Fashion is like cooking: the essential ingredients are creativity, good products and balance!

Dress and necklace: Marie Saint Pierre
Shoes and ring: La Baie centre-ville (hbc.com)
“After my accident, fashion resonated with me as I built back my self-esteem and sense of femininity and dreamed of continuing my life as a contemporary dancer, despite this new identity as a disabled person. My desire to put on make-up, do my hair and wear my most beautiful clothes never left me. Today I’m convinced that these little beauty rituals helped me shed feelings of shame about my situation and instilled me with confidence and self-assurance so that I could meet people’s gaze with a smile on my face.”

Jacket: Denis Gagnon
Jewelry: La Baie centre-ville (hbc.com)
“Ads full of stereotypes have a negative impact on the self-esteem of women of all ages! I support Healthy Fashion because I believe it is important to represent other types of women than those we usually see in fashion advertising. 90% of the women who buy clothes do not correspond to the beauty ideals reflected in promotional images. I hope this project will make a difference.”

Lili-les-Bains outfit: Louise Daoust
Personal jewelry: Yves St-Laurent
What we see in fashion photography is unrealistic. It’s a utopian image that very few women can live up to. And this creates self-esteem problems. You have to love yourself—your body, who you are, your soul!

Création Gazelles: Mirmonde Phildor
Jewelry: Anne-Marie Chagnon
Shoes: Betsey Johnson, La Baie centre-ville (hbc.com)
I create clothes that I love, imagining the things I’d like to wear if I were a woman. And it’s even better when a woman who doesn’t conform to the ideal body type, say a large woman or a disabled woman, wears them and feels comfortable and attractive!

Denis Gagnon, designer
denisgagnon.ca

…I think that a project like this will stir things up. And it must be done. In the United States designers broke through the resistance and brought large women to the runways. They were wildly successful! Why couldn’t this happen in Montréal?...

Mirmonde Phildor, designer
gazellesmontreal.com

…With the normalization of cosmetic surgery, the message we seem to be getting now is: you’re in charge of how you look. There’s a lot of pressure to conform to a particular image…

Sandrine Belleteste, stylist
sbelleteste@videotron.ca

It really irritates me to see so many images of women who look nothing like real women. And they don’t correspond to what I or my male friends are attracted to in a woman. It’s people’s essence, what they communicate to others that’s beautiful…

Marc Montplaisir, photographer
www.2m2.ca/marcmontplaisir

“Nature creates only free beings; society produces only tyrants and slaves”; quote from Des femmes et de leur éducation by Pierre-Ambroise Choderlos de Laclos.

Marie Saint Pierre, designer
mariesaintpierre.com

…I’ve been working with perceptions and images for the past 25 years and I’ve noticed a change in direction and thinking. I believe in balance and in a harmonious world that is respectful of difference. Let’s all put our energy into being creative!...

Sophie Des Marais, public relations
sophie.dm@sympatico.ca

Beauty is so much about attitude!...

Louise Daoust, Lili les bains designer
lililiesbains.com

…We have the right to give free rein to our creativity, regardless of our age, height or weight…

Valérie Joyal for
Anne-Marie Chagnon, jewelry creations
annemariechagnon.com

We sincerely thank our contributors in the fashion world for their involvement in this project. You can read their entire commentary at: www.rqasf.qc.ca (French only)